

# A Benefit of Believing in God's Providence

## Courage to Stand up to the Bully

### Points to Consider

1. The Reality of Bullies
2. Responses to Bullies
3. Believing in God's Providence Makes all the Difference

### The Reality of Bullies

**Gen 37:23-24** *So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. NKJV*

Sometimes bullies are not trying to get anything out of us; they are simply trying to get \_\_\_\_\_ of us.

Jealousy is a common \_\_\_\_\_ of bullies.

**Gen 39:7-10** *And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" 10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.*

Potiphar's wife bullied Joseph by nagging him to \_\_\_\_\_ with her.

Potiphar's wife had \_\_\_\_\_ over Joseph. She eventually had him thrown into prison.

**Judg 16:15-18** *Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies." 16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, 17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." 18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." NKJV*

Bullies don't always use force. Sometimes they simply \_\_\_\_\_ people down.

A common tactic of a bully is to make surrendering easier than fighting.

**1 Sam 17:4-11** *And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. 7 Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. 8 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." 10 And the*

*Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. NKJV*

Some bullies intimidate, \_\_\_\_\_, and challenge people to fights.

**Judg 6:3-6** *So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. 6 So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. NKJV*

The Midianites bullied the Israelites by \_\_\_\_\_ their property causing them to be "greatly impoverished."

**Dan 3:13-15** *Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" NKJV*

Some bullies have the power to \_\_\_\_\_ people.

**Matt 20:24-28** *And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." NKJV*

The temptation to use power to bully others is so strong that Jesus had to warn his own \_\_\_\_\_ against it.

**1 Peter 5:1-4** *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. NKJV*

The Holy Spirit led Peter to instruct his fellow \_\_\_\_\_ not to bully the flock for selfish reasons. Instead they should be good examples of \_\_\_\_\_ servants.

**3 John 9-10** *I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. NKJV*

Diotrephes loved to be first. He wanted \_\_\_\_\_! Anyone who didn't do what he wanted got kicked out of the church.

## Responses to Bullies

**1 Peter 2:18-25** *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.* NKJV

Sometimes when we are being bullied we simply have to \_\_\_\_\_ it.

We might be in a situation where there is \_\_\_\_\_ we can do about it. (boss, teacher, ruler...)

We might have to take bullying because it brings God glory. This is especially true when we are bullied for following \_\_\_\_\_.

When dealing with Pharaoh, the Israelites tried \_\_\_\_\_ with him but ultimately resigned to accepting the bullying.

Joseph also tried reasoning with his bullies. He \_\_\_\_\_ his brothers, and he rationally explained to Potiphar's wife the reason he could not go along with her request.

If you are dealing with a true bully that rarely works. It can actually make things worse. It is worth a try because it tests the \_\_\_\_\_ of the one with whom you are dealing. (Pharaoh and King George III)

Samson made the wrong choice and gave in when he didn't have to.

**1 Sam 13:5-7** *Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7 And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.* NKJV

During the time of Saul, some of the Israelites \_\_\_\_\_ while others \_\_\_\_\_ from their tormentors.

Elijah ran from Jezebel, another \_\_\_\_\_ bully.

God's plan for the Israelites was for them to leave the bully. There is a difference between leaving and running.

**1 Sam 17:45-46** *Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.* NKJV

David decided to \_\_\_\_\_ the bully. Although physical encounters are less likely for us, at times, the best choice for us is to \_\_\_\_\_ up to the bully.

**Dan 3:12** *There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up." NKJV*

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to give in to the King's request.

## Believing in God's Providence Makes All the Difference

**1 Sam 17:47** *Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." NKJV*

The ability to see God's providence in the \_\_\_\_\_ allowed David to stand up to the bully in the present.

This story also illustrates that when the bully is defeated, his henchmen \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ex 2:11-13** *Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" NKJV*

**Ex 2:16-17** *Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. NKJV*

Moses was constantly standing up to bullies.

He eventually stood up to the \_\_\_\_\_ bully in the world.

**Dan 3:16-18** *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."*

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego believed that God would \_\_\_\_\_ for them if they were thrown in the furnace or not.

## Summary

- Bullies will always be a part of life. If you are one, pray that God will touch your heart.
- Pray and believe in God's providence.
- Sometimes there is nothing we can do about bullies. We must learn to cope.
- Sometimes we need to simply avoid bullies.
- We can rationalize with a person to test their hearts.
- Sometimes we need to stand up or someone who is being bullied.
- Sometimes we need to confront the bully directly.